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The BONE BOX



MY NAME IS CARRIE CARSON, AND I'M
FOURTEEN. It's January. School has started again
and the winter holidays are over. I'm really glad.
Maybe now I can put all the horrible things behind
me. Maybe now the nightmares will go away.

It all started at the Black Falls Natural History Museum. Just
thinking about the name still makes my flesh crawl. And after
you find out what happened there to me, my dad, and my big
sister, Becky, yours will, too. Maybe, like me, you'll wake up
screaming from the same nightmare every night.

The nightmare is just awful. I'm trapped inside a long, black
box – like a coffin – and in the box I've turned into somebody
else. I scream to be let out but no one hears me. No one saves me
from the horrors of greenish black bugs oozing out of my pores
and crawling all over my skin.

I'm afraid to close my eyes when I get into bed. In fact, I'm
absolutely terrified of falling asleep.

Maybe you'd better not read any further. Maybe it'll fill your
dreams with terror, too.



My parents are divorced, and my sister, Becky, and I live with our dad. Last August we moved from Iowa to Black Falls, Idaho when Dad got the job of director at the museum here.

We moved into a little two-storey house not far from the museum, and at first everything was great.

The trouble started early in December when an ancient gold sword went missing from the museum. There was no sign of a break-in, and the museum had a supposedly foolproof security system. No one had a clue how the theft could have occurred.



Over the next few weeks more valuable artefacts vanished into thin air – a collection of Persian jewellery, a hand-carved jade elephant and an Egyptian decanter covered with precious gems.

The police made a thorough investigation and concluded that the robberies had to be an inside job. I'll never forget how Dad looked when he got home that night.

"They think I'm responsible for the robberies." He sat down in a chair like a beaten-up old punch bag. "I've been suspended indefinitely without pay until my name is cleared. I could go to jail."

We tried to cheer him up but it didn't do much good.

"We've got to do something to help Dad," I told Becky.

"Yeah, Carrie, I know. But what?"

"Well, find out who's really committing the burglaries for starters."

"And how are we going to do that?"

I hurried up the stairs ahead of her. "C'mon," I said, "I'll show you what I have in mind."

Becky's bedroom was on the second floor with a perfect view of the entire Black Falls Museum. I pulled out my birthday present from Dad – a high-powered telescope.



"We're going to stake out the place," I told Becky excitedly. "We'll clear Dad's name, I know it!"

"Now, here's the plan. We'll take three-hour shifts. I'll go first while you try to get some sleep. I'll wake you at eleven o'clock sharp, OK?"

She nodded. "This is so cool!" she exclaimed. "I feel like a real detective. Which reminds me – what if we actually do see something?"

I grinned. "That's easy. We call the police immediately."

Nothing came of our stake-out that night... or the next, or the next. It wasn't until the following Sunday night that it happened, a real horror show beyond anything we could have imagined.



After dinner Dad went over to see a friend of his, a lawyer who was helping him with his problems. So we headed up to Becky's room to continue our stake-out.

Becky gasped.

"What? What?" I asked, peering out into the dreary night while Becky remained glued to the telescope.

"The museum is pitch black, except for the top floor where a security guard is watching the surveillance monitors. But in the alley beside Burton Electronics, I just saw someone in overalls open a manhole cover and disappear down into the street."

"Why would anybody be doing work on a night like this?" I wondered out loud. "Let me take a look."

Becky stepped aside and I squinted through the telescope. "Nothing's going on at the museum. I don't see the connection." I stepped back, and then it hit me. "I've got it. The sewer line leads right to the museum! C'mon, let's go and investigate!"

The manhole cover weighed a ton but, luckily, whoever had gone into the sewer before us had left a crowbar behind.

Becky switched on the torch we had brought with us, and we climbed down metal rungs into the putrid, disgusting sewer.

"This place is gross!" muttered Becky.

"No kidding," I said, wading through ankle-deep filth.

The further we went, the worse the place became. The sewer walls were covered with greenish brown slime. All kinds of decaying, sick-smelling debris, including the bones of small animals, crunched underfoot. Cockroaches crawled around in writhing, black masses.

"Wh-what's that?" Becky muttered.

Terrified, we both stared ahead. Yellow eyes, which were definitely not human, were watching us. Then the eyes receded and sucked back into the wall.

A hand grabbed me. I screamed.

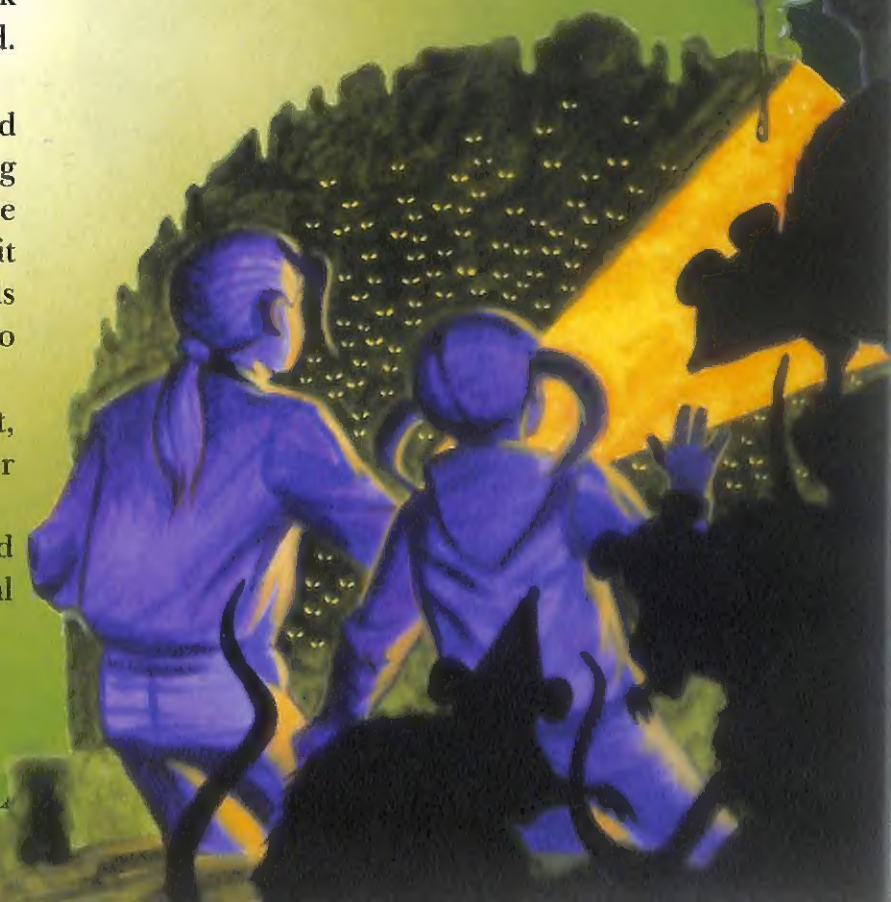
"Shhhush!" hissed Becky. "It's only me!"

"Those eyes!" I said. "What was that thing?"

We turned a corner. "I think it was a –" Becky started to say. She let out a gasp of horror. Ahead there were millions of eyes – attached to squealing heads.

"Rats! The place is crawling with rats!" I cried.

"Let's head back," I begged.



But Becky was determined to carry on. "We've got to do it for Dad," she said. "We're almost there."

My legs were feeling rubbery, but I slogged along at her side for what seemed like years. Eventually, we scrambled above the water and muck.

"Look at the footprints leading straight ahead," said Becky raising the torch so they could follow the prints.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"Right below the basement of the museum, I'm almost positive," she answered. "And that's where the thief gets in!" she suddenly exclaimed, aiming the light at the wall.

Where a grating should have been, there was a smallish rectangular opening. The grating had been removed and was propped against the sewer wall.



I crawled through the opening into a dark basement, then reached out a hand and helped Becky through.

"So that's how it was done!" Becky whispered.

"How what was done?" I asked.

She pointed the torch at a box-shaped electrical device on the floor. It was about

the size of a small TV, and cords snaking up from it were attached to a thick electrical line overhead.

"It looks like it's connected to the line for the surveillance equipment," said Becky. "I'll bet it overrides the circuits, and the security guard watching the monitors probably gets the same pictures over and over, showing nothing is happening."

"But what do we do now?" I asked.

"We've got to trap the thief in here. Then we let the security guard – and the police – know what's going on."

One after the other, Becky ripped the cords from the surveillance line. As an alarm began to bleep loudly and the lights flashed, Becky shoved the electrical device into the opening in the wall, completely blocking it off.

"Now he's trapped in the museum!" said Becky.

"And so are we, genius!" I scoffed. "We..."

"With the alarm going off, the thief's going to freak," said Becky, interrupting me. "He's going to try to get back out the way he came in."

"Then, let's get out of here!"



We raced up a staircase and hurried through to a laboratory of some kind. The place looked like a dungeon inside a house of horrors. The flashing lights lit up counters of bones, saws and knives hanging from hooks, and shelves full of creepy things in jars. I didn't see the long, coffin-like box

on the floor until it was too late. That's when my foot caught on it and I fell flat on my face.

"C'mon, Carrie," Becky whispered, pulling me to my feet.

We headed towards the stairs to our right when suddenly we heard rapid footsteps coming down. Scared out of our wits, we rushed towards the stairs to our left and saw a man run across the lab and down the steps leading to the basement. I only caught a glimpse of him in the flashing light, but he had red hair, wore overalls, and carried what looked like a canvas bag.

"It's Roger Burton," I whispered.

"Yeah, I know," said Becky. "The owner of Burton Electronics." She grinned. "And is he in for a big surprise!"

Burton began making banging and crashing noises in the basement.

"He's trying to get out!" I said.

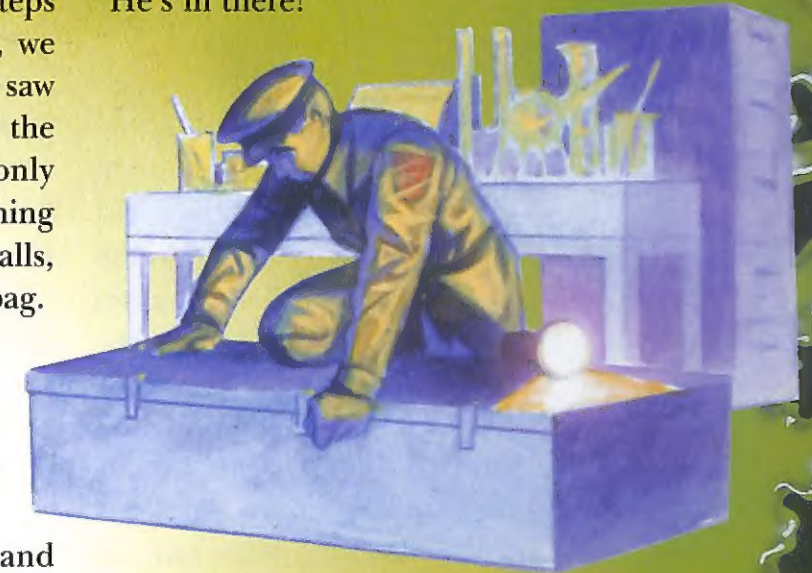
Becky nodded and smiled, the image of her face flashing off and on like a neon sign.

"He can't get out," I screamed. "He's coming back up here!"

I fell silent at the sounds of rapid footsteps. Burton emerged into the strobe lit weirdness of the laboratory. He looked around, then headed for the other staircase – just as the beam of a strong flashlight suddenly illuminated the stairs and far wall. Someone else was coming down the steps towards him! Burton ran back into the lab. My heart stopped. I thought for a second he was heading for us. Instead, he stopped. As a security guard turned on the lights, I saw the lid to the long, rectangular wooden box close.

"He's hiding in there!" I whispered hurriedly to Becky.

But Becky wasn't paying any attention to me. Startling the security guard, she walked out into full view. She had one finger to her mouth in a gesture for silence. Then she pointed at the long box and moved her lips, forming the words, "He's in there!"



The burly security guard looked puzzled. Then the box suddenly moved a little and the lid began to open. In a flash the guard jumped on the box and flipped a latch, locking it closed.

"That'll hold you!" he yelled at Burton, who began kicking and screaming.



My eyes on the heavy box, my nerves on edge, I came and stood next to Becky.

"Who are you two then?" asked the guard.

We explained briefly and told him where our father could be reached.

The guard picked up his mobile phone. "The police are already on their way,

and your dad should be here any minute, too," he said after finishing with his phone. "I'll have to let them in, so let's talk as we walk." He glanced back at the box. "He's not going anywhere for a while!"



We left the thief shrieking and banging away inside the box. On the way upstairs, we explained to the guard why we had sneaked into the museum.

"What's that box for?" I asked.

"Don't know," said the guard. "I'm pretty new here." He laughed. "Right now it's a jail!"

Minutes later, three police officers arrived. As he started to explain what was going on, Dad came rushing in.

For Dad's benefit, the guard started over and put a hand on each of our shoulders.

"All the credit really goes to your kids," he told Dad. "Thanks to them, we've got the creep all locked up as tight as can be."

"I only caught a quick look at him," I said. "But the thief is Roger Burton, the owner of the electronics shop."

"Which would explain how he knew how to override the surveillance equipment," said Becky. "He's probably an electronics whiz or something."

"Where is this character?" asked one of the policemen.

"Follow me," said the guard, heading for the staircase.

"He's locked up in some sort of big wooden box down in the lab."

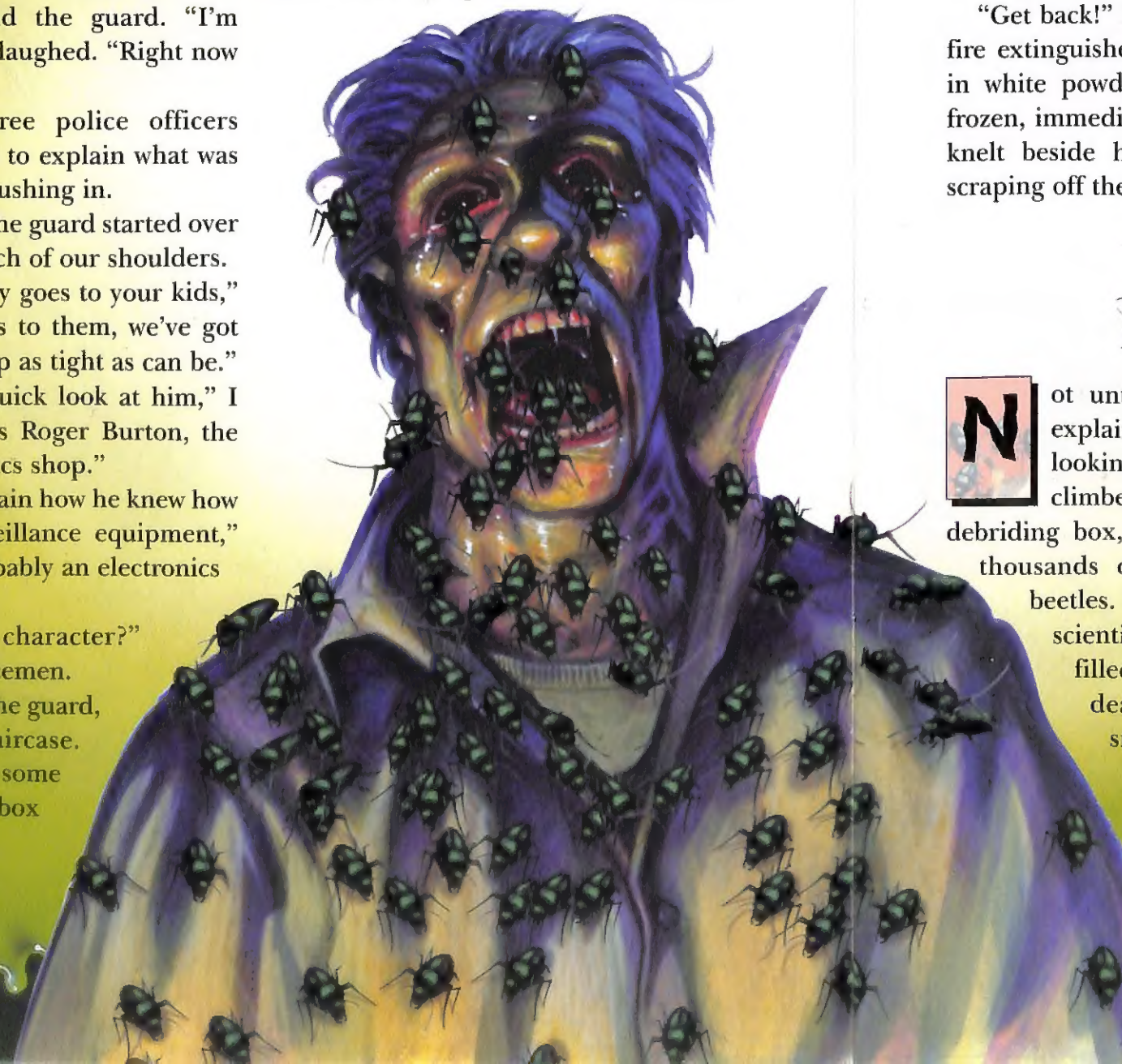
"Oh noooo!" Dad

almost screamed the words. "NO!" He rushed past everybody, taking the stairs as fast as he could go, with all the rest of us hurrying behind, wondering what he was so upset about.

I wish I hadn't followed him. I wish I hadn't seen.

"It's the debrider!" yelled Dad as he ran across the lab to the box. He flipped the latch, unlocking it.

Even the police gagged in horror. The lid swung open and a monster arose from the box. It was Roger Burton – or what was left of him. His face was masked with greenish black beetle-like bugs and as he screamed, bugs spilled from his mouth.



He stumbled from the coffin, reaching out to us for help... with skeletal hands. One arm, up to the elbow, was nothing but raw flesh and bone. Shrieking, he thrashed about wildly, clawing at the bugs and ripping off what was left of his overalls.

"What's happening to him?" the security guard gasped. "What are those things?"

"Help me!" Burton squealed, bugs crawling over his eyes and into his skin.

One of the cops took off his jacket and, wrestling Burton to the floor, used it to wipe bugs off him. The other was literally yelling into a mobile phone, calling for back-up and an ambulance.

"Get back!" Dad shouted as he let off a fire extinguisher. Burton was enshrouded in white powder, and the bugs, looking frozen, immediately stopped moving. Dad knelt beside him and frantically began scraping off the bugs.



Not until the next day did Dad explain about the box. Burton, looking for a hiding place, had climbed into something called a debriding box, a cedar chest filled with thousands of bugs called dermestid beetles. It's sort of revolting, but scientists commonly use the bug-filled box to clean the flesh off dead animals. Dead rats, snakes and alligators are put into them, and the beetles eat their flesh, leaving only the bones. Then the skeletons are removed,

cleaned up, and either put on display or kept for research and study.

The artefacts Burton had stolen that night, and in the weeks before, were all recovered. Most of them were stashed in his electronics shop. Their total value was well over two million dollars.

Roger Burton did not survive. He died of heart failure brought about by shock, blood loss and damage to his internal organs. Maybe it was better that he died. They say he would have looked like a monster if he had lived.

Even though he was a thief, I feel sorry for him. No one deserves such a horrible fate. Over and over, I keep imagining what it must have been like locked in that box being eaten alive.

Becky and I hardly ever mention the subject. It bothers her a lot, but not as much as me, I don't think. Dad worries about me and keeps asking if I'm OK. I just smile and say I'm fine.

But I'm not really. Three weeks have passed, and I still feel weird inside. I sleep with the lights on. And before I get into bed I check everywhere under the covers for bugs. I have the same horrible nightmare every night. I'm in a dark place, and bugs are swarming all over me and burrowing under my skin. Sometimes they crawl out of my mouth and empty eye sockets... and out of the pores of my skin.

Neighbours treat Becky and me like heroes. I don't want to be a hero. All I want is to feel normal again, and for the nightmares to stop.

THE END

OUR HAUNTED WORLD



From Russian Federation cities and lonely forests come tales of ghosts and other weird happenings...

WOOLLY SURVIVORS

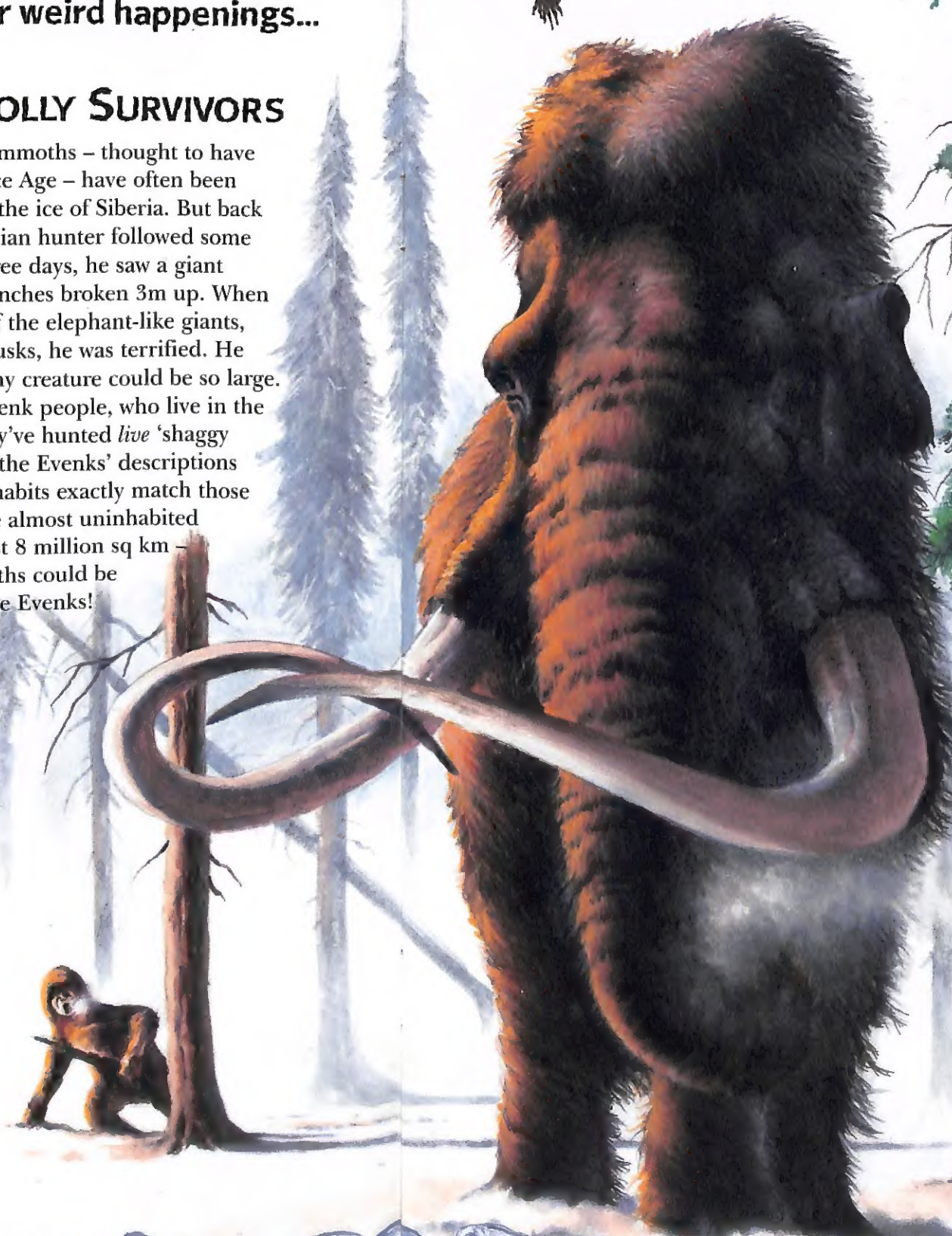
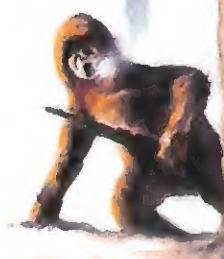
Prehistoric mammoths – thought to have died out in the Ice Age – have often been found, frozen in the ice of Siberia. But back in 1918, when a Russian hunter followed some 60cm oval tracks for three days, he saw a giant dung-heap and tree branches broken 3m up. When at last he spotted one of the elephant-like giants, with its massive, curly tusks, he was terrified. He had not believed that any creature could be so large.

More recently, the Evenk people, who live in the Siberian forests, say they've hunted *live* 'shaggy elephants'! Experts say the Evenks' descriptions of the beasts and their habits exactly match those of a mammoth. In these almost uninhabited forests – covering almost 8 million sq km – any number of mammoths could be living, known only to the Evenks!

THE GHOST ON THE THRONE

In 1796, just days before she died, a weird thing happened to Catherine the Great (below), the Russian empress. One night, several of her attendants saw her leave her bedroom and head for the Throne Chamber. Imagine their terror when, minutes later, they heard the empress calling out for them from her bedroom! Catherine was told of this, and everyone hurried to the Throne Chamber – where they all saw a ghostly 'double' of the empress, sitting on the throne, bathed in an eerie green light! As Catherine fainted, the phantom vanished into thin air.

Could the ghostly presence have been a forewarning of the empress's death from a stroke, which occurred two days later?



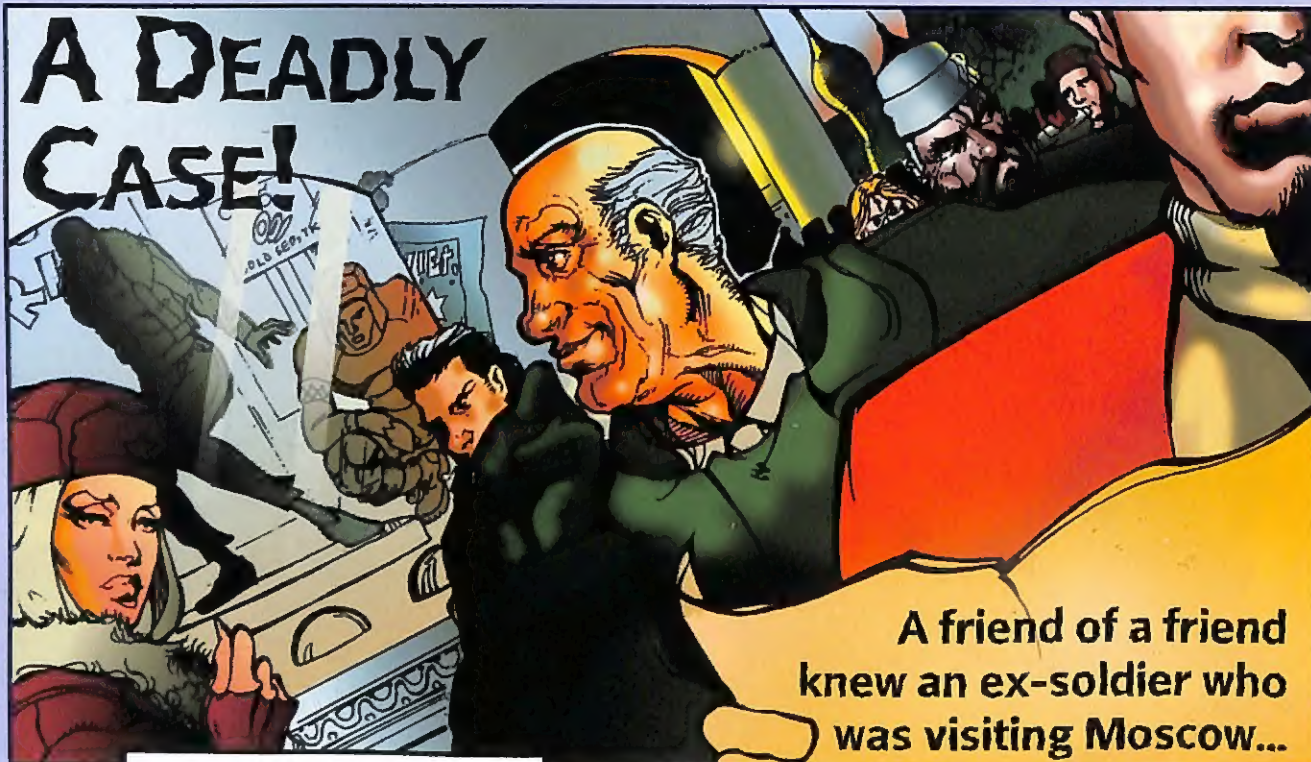
▲ This 1874 print shows how Russian ghosts might seek to get their revenge on the living!



UFO ATTACK

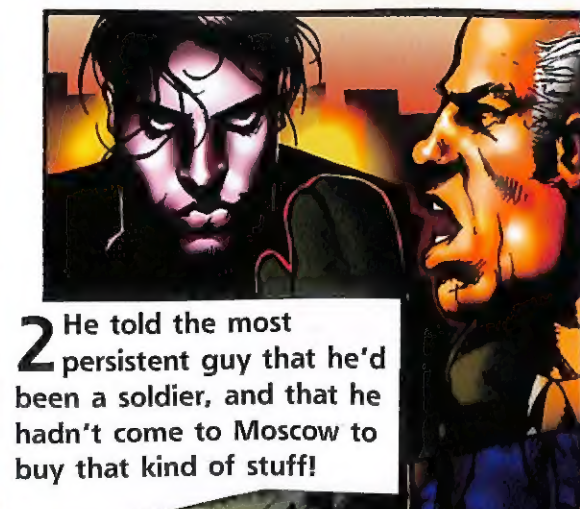
Just after midnight on December 13 1990, mysterious blips appeared on the screens of the military radar tracking station at Kuybyshev (now called Samara). The long-range detector failed to identify the objects and broke down – just as the blips made a beeline for the station. The soldiers scrambled as the largest 'UFO', which was triangular in shape, shot over them at just 9m above the ground! As it hovered near Post 12, a smaller radar installation nearby, there was a flash and Post 12's aerials caught fire and collapsed. Described as being soot-black and smooth, about 3m thick with sides 14m long, it hovered for 90 minutes before zooming off. Even 'stealth' bombers cannot hover, and no one has ever come up with an explanation for what happened at Samara.

A DEADLY CASE!



A friend of a friend knew an ex-soldier who was visiting Moscow...

1 Outside his hotel, people tried to sell him gold, amber jewellery and icons.



2 He told the most persistent guy that he'd been a soldier, and that he hadn't come to Moscow to buy that kind of stuff!



3 The Moskovite said, "I suspected that you were a soldier. Come with me... I know what will interest you!"

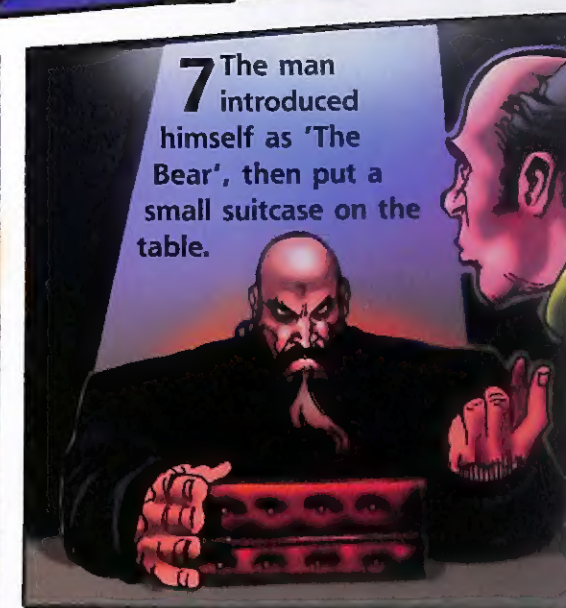
4 Intrigued, the tourist followed the Moskovite into a nearby building...



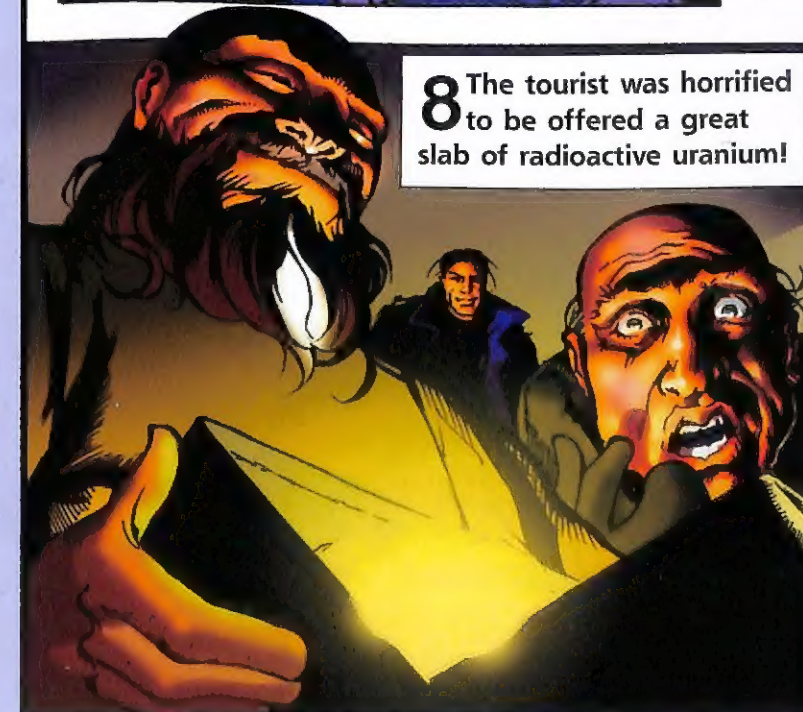
5 ...and into a tiny basement room littered with boxes and suitcases. A large man sat at the table, counting foreign banknotes.



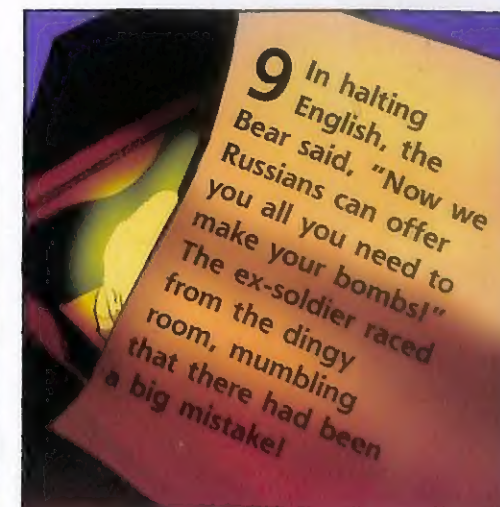
6 The two Russians talked in low voices for a minute or two.



7 The man introduced himself as 'The Bear', then put a small suitcase on the table.



8 The tourist was horrified to be offered a great slab of radioactive uranium!



9 In halting English, the Bear said, "Now we Russians can offer you all you need to make your bombs! The ex-soldier raced from the dingy room, mumbling that there had been a big mistake!"

PS The Bear died later that week from radiation sickness. No one knows how the guide or the ex-soldier are doing...



CHISLEHURST CAVES

Special Investigation File: 34

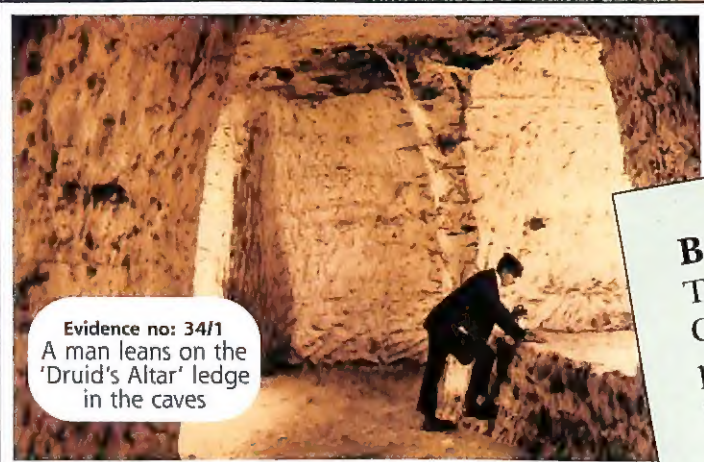
Subject: a mysterious network of caves
Place: Chislehurst, Kent

SpineChiller creates a file

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The caves cut into the chalk hillside at Chislehurst on the outskirts of London were probably dug by prehistoric people. Druids are rumoured to have carried out human sacrifices there, and Romans may have mined the chalk. Later, the caves were also used by smugglers to hide stolen goods. But by the late 19th century, they were a home only to bats.

In World War I, the caves began a new lease of life as an ammunition store. During World War II, they housed refugees from the London air raids. Then, in the 1970s, they provided an unusual 'concert hall' for rock stars, and in the 1980s were used as a spooky film and TV set. Throughout these years, people saw and heard many ghosts in this underground maze.



Evidence no: 34/1
A man leans on the 'Druid's Altar' ledge in the caves



Evidence no: 34/2
A scene from the 1980 film 'Inseminoid', made in the caves

July 1980

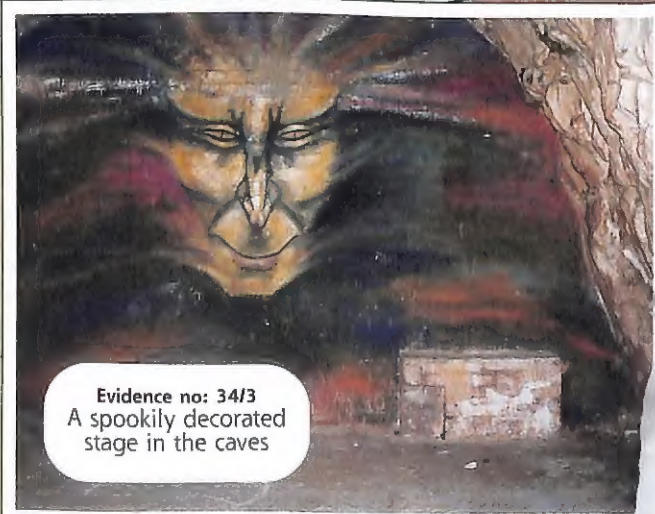
Dear Cheryl

The children have been studying the Romans at school, so I've been on the look-out for Roman sites to visit in the holidays. Then I heard about the Chislehurst Caves.

The caves are supposedly haunted by the ghost of a Roman centurion. According to legend, he was killed beside a local stream. All the children were really disappointed that we didn't see him ourselves!

Hope to see you soon.

Felicity



Evidence no: 34/3
A spookily decorated stage in the caves



1985 NIGHT-TIME NIGHTMARE

Years ago, a man broke into the Chislehurst Caves. His corpse was found ten days later. Some people think ghosts frightened him to death.

After that tragedy, few people went into the caves when it was dark. But then a reward was offered to anyone prepared to stay overnight. One policeman took up the challenge and survived. But he said that he felt a ghostly presence.

At Hallowe'en this year, two cave guides stayed underground until dawn broke. But it seems very likely that the caves' owners will soon ban such daring exploits. So there will be no more late-night frights!

GHOSTS' GALLERY

The Roman soldier is not the only spectre said to walk the Chislehurst Caves – in fact there's quite a ghostly gathering down there! Among the other spine-chilling spirits are:

- 1 A woman who drowned in an underground pool. According to legend, people deliberately tied rocks to her body to prevent her escape.
- 2 Several horses. These can be heard neighing in distress at the place where some stables fell into the caves. But they are never seen.
- 3 Many groups of children. They are also heard but never glimpsed. Some are laughing and shouting, while others cry in misery.
- 4 A strange, hunchbacked old man.



Evidence no: 34/4
A 'ghost' (created by the photographer) stands at the Druid's Altar

CONCLUSION

Many ghost stories have grown up around the Chislehurst Caves because of their colourful past. As these tales are impossible to prove or disprove, they will certainly continue to attract visitors to the site for years to come – but only in the daytime. The owners have now banned overnight visits because the caves are just too spooky!

Unexplained



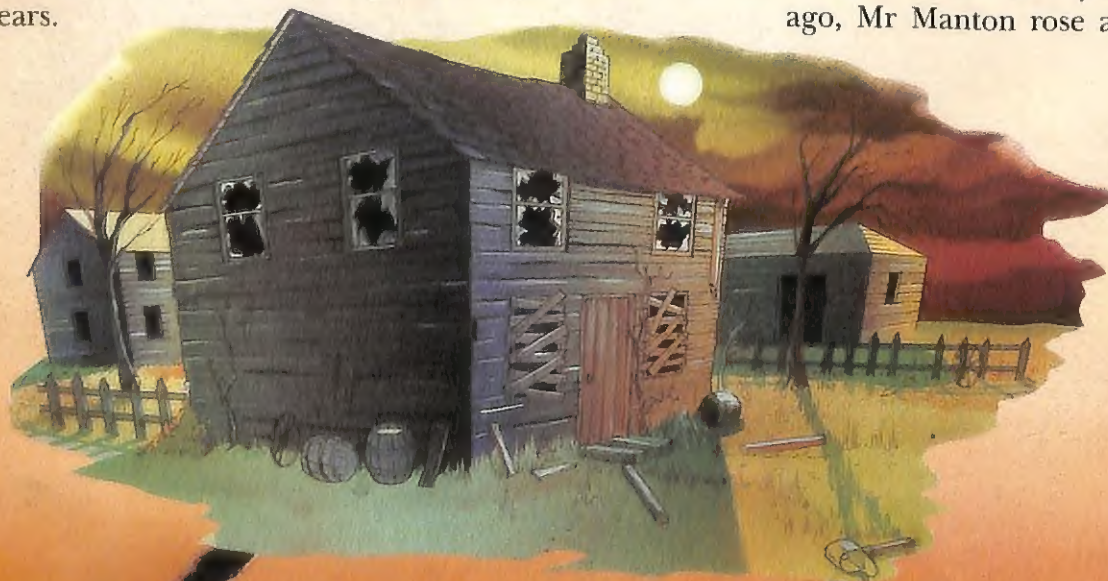
Chapter 1

The Middle Toe of the Right Foot

Retold from a story by Ambrose Bierce

It is well known that the house where the Manton family once lived is haunted. In all the rural district near about, and even in the town of Marshall, a mile away, not one person of unbiased mind entertains a doubt of it. The evidence that the house is haunted is of two kinds: the testimony of witnesses who have seen it with their own eyes, and that of the house itself. There are many possible objections to the former, but facts that everyone can observe are convincing.

In the first place, the Manton house has been unoccupied by mortals for more than ten years, and with its outbuildings is slowly falling into decay – a circumstance which in itself the wise will not ignore. It stands a little way off the loneliest reach of the Marshall and Harriston road, in an opening which was once a farm. This is still disfigured with strips of rotting fence and half covered with brambles. They run across stony soil that has not been ploughed for many years.



The house itself is in tolerably good condition, though badly weather stained. It is also in dire need of attention from a glazier, as the young boys of the region have smashed many of its windows. It is two storeys high, nearly square, its front pierced by a single doorway with a window boarded up to the very top on either side. The corresponding, unboarded, windows above serve to admit light and rain to the rooms of the upper floor. Grass and weeds grow pretty rankly all about, and a few shade trees, somewhat the worse for wind, and leaning all in one direction, seem to be making an effort to run away.

In short, as the Marshall town humorist explained in the columns of the Advance newspaper, "The proposition that the Manton house is badly haunted is the only logical conclusion." The public has another reason to believe that the dwelling is a place where supernatural phenomena occur. For one night about ten years ago, Mr Manton rose and

cut the throats of his wife and two small children. Then he fled at once to another part of the country.

To this house, one summer evening, came four men in a wagon. Three of them promptly alighted, and the one who had been driving hitched the horses to the only remaining post of what had been a fence. The fourth remained seated in the wagon. "Come," said one of his companions, approaching him, while the others moved away in the direction of the dwelling, "this is the place."

The man addressed did not make a move. "By God!" he said harshly, "this is a trick, and it looks to me as if you were in it."

"Perhaps I am," the other said, looking him straight in the face and speaking in a tone which had something of contempt in it. "You will remember, however, that the choice of place was, with your own agreement, left to the other side. Of course if you are afraid of spooks?"

"I am afraid of nothing," the man interrupted with another oath, and sprang to the ground. The two then joined the others at the door, which one of them had already opened, although with some difficulty as the lock and hinges were rusty. All entered. Inside it was dark, but the man who had unlocked the door produced a candle and matches so that they could have some light. He then unlocked a door on their right as they stood in the passage. This gave them entrance to a large, square room that the candle but dimly lit.

The floor had a thick carpeting of dust, which partly muffled their footsteps. Cobwebs were in the angles of the walls and hung from the ceiling like strips of rotting lace, waving in the air that the men's movements had disturbed. The room had



two windows in adjoining sides, but from neither could anything be seen except the rough inner surfaces of boards a few inches from the glass. There was no fireplace, no furniture; there was nothing. Besides the cobwebs and the dust, the four men were the only objects there which were not a part of the structure.

The men looked strange in the yellow light of the candle. The one who had so reluctantly alighted was especially spectacular. He might have been called sensational. He was of middle age, heavily built, deep chested and broad shouldered. Looking at his figure, one would have said that he had a giant's strength. His features gave the impression that he would use it like a giant, too. He was clean shaven, his hair rather closely cropped and grey. His low forehead was seamed with wrinkles above the eyes, and over the nose these became vertical. The heavy black brows were saved

WORD POWER

rankly – vigorously; in abundance

forbidding – hostile; threatening

pallor – paleness

bowie knives – hunting knives with short handles

scabbards – knife-holders; sheaths

principals – the main participants, here the duellers themselves

second – a person who acts as assistant to a competitor, for example in a fight

cordiality – friendliness; warmth

from meeting only by an upward turn at what would otherwise have been the point of contact. Deeply sunken beneath these, a pair of eyes of uncertain colour, but obviously too small, glowed in the obscure light. There was something forbidding in their expression, which was not bettered by the cruel mouth and wide jaw. The nose was well enough, as noses go – one does not expect much of noses. All that was sinister in the man's face seemed emphasised by an unnatural pallor: he appeared altogether bloodless.

The appearance of the other men was commonplace. They were such persons as one meets and forgets that one has met. All were younger than the man described. Between him and the eldest of the others, who stood apart, there was apparently no kindly feeling. They avoided looking at each other.

"Gentlemen," said the man holding the candle and keys, "I believe everything is right. Are you ready, Mr Rosser?"

The man standing apart from the group bowed and smiled.

"And you, Mr Grossmith?"

The heavy man bowed and scowled.

"You will be pleased to remove your outer clothing."

Their hats, coats, waistcoats and neckwear were soon removed and thrown outside the door, in the passage. The man with the candle now nodded, and the fourth man – he who had urged Grossmith to leave the wagon – produced from the pocket of his overcoat two long, murderous looking bowie knives, which he drew now from their leather scabbards.

"They are exactly alike," he said, presenting one to each of the two principals. By this time the dullest observer would have understood the nature of this meeting: it was to be a duel to the death.

Each dueller took a knife, examined it critically near the candle and tested the strength of blade and handle across his lifted knee. Their persons were then

searched in turn, each by the other's second.

"If it is agreeable to you, Mr Grossmith," said the man holding the light, "you will place yourself in that corner."

He indicated the angle of the room farthest from the door. Grossmith walked over there, his second parting from him with a grasp of the hand which had nothing of cordiality in it. In the angle nearest the door Mr Rosser stationed himself, and after a whispered consultation his second left him, joining the other near the door. At that moment the candle was suddenly extinguished, leaving all in profound darkness. This may have been done by a draught from the opened door. Whatever the cause, the effect was startling.

"Gentlemen," said a voice, which sounded unfamiliar in the altered conditions, "gentlemen, you will not move until you hear the closing of the outer door."



THE FACTS

Ambrose Gwinnet Bierce (1842-19??) was born in Ohio, USA. He served in the American Civil War (1861-65), then began working as a journalist in San Francisco.



In 1871, Bierce published his first short story, called *The Haunted Valley*. Later the same year, he moved to England.

In 1875, Bierce returned to the US and continued to work as a journalist, becoming known for his

sharp, witty style. Many of his short stories, which were often written for newspapers, featured supernatural themes. A short story collection – including the story retold here – was later published under the title *Can Such Things Be?*

When he was 70 years old, Bierce announced that he was off to join Pancho Villa's rebels in Mexico. He was never seen or heard of again.

A sound of tramping ensued, then the closing of the inner door. Finally the outer one closed with a crash which shook the entire building.

A few minutes afterwards, a farmer's boy met a light wagon which was being driven furiously towards the town of Marshall. He declared that behind the two figures on the front seat stood a third. It had its hands upon the bowed shoulders of the others, who appeared to struggle vainly to free themselves from its grasp. This figure unlike the others was clad in white, and had undoubtedly boarded the wagon as it passed the haunted house.



CHINESE HOROSCOPES

BANDED FOR LIFE ▶

An 18th-century Chinese horoscope chart. The 12 animal signs of the zodiac are shown on the outer band. The inner bands detail personality characteristics and compatibility with other signs.

Find out about Chinese horoscopes and test your personality against this ancient Eastern tradition.

Chinese horoscopes are based on a cycle of 60 lunar years, made up of five twelve-year cycles. The Chinese believe that each of the twelve years – named after an animal – has specific characteristics and that people born in that year will show these characteristics in their personalities.

NAMING THE NAMES

The story goes that before the Lord Buddha, the founder of the Buddhist religion, departed from the Earth he summoned all the animals to appear before him. Only twelve animals obeyed, and, as a reward, he named the years after the animals that came and in the order in which they arrived. The animals are: the Rat, the Ox, the Tiger, the Rabbit (or Hare), the Dragon, the Snake, the Horse, the Sheep, the Monkey, the Rooster, the Dog and the Boar (or Pig).

CHART SUCCESS

Find your birthday on the Chinese Horoscope Chart on the right, then look up your animal sign to see if you recognise your personality.



▼ WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?

There's nothing wrong with calling someone a pig or a rat – as long as you're plotting their horoscope chart!



CHINESE HOROSCOPE CHART

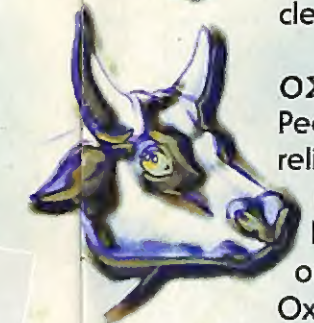
Rat	February 16, 1972 to February 2, 1973
Ox	February 3, 1973 to January 22, 1974
Tiger	January 23, 1974 to February 10, 1975
Rabbit	February 11, 1975 to January 30, 1976
Dragon	January 31, 1976 to February 17, 1977
Snake	February 18, 1977 to February 6, 1978
Horse	February 7, 1978 to January 27, 1979
Sheep	January 28, 1979 to February 15, 1980
Monkey	February 16, 1980 to February 4, 1981
Rooster	February 5, 1981 to January 24, 1982
Dog	January 25, 1982 to February 12, 1983
Boar	February 13, 1983 to February 1, 1984

Rat	February 2, 1984 to February 19, 1985
Ox	February 20, 1985 to February 8, 1986
Tiger	February 9, 1986 to January 28, 1987
Rabbit	January 29, 1987 to February 16, 1988
Dragon	February 17, 1988 to February 5, 1989
Snake	February 6, 1989 to January 26, 1990
Horse	January 27, 1990 to February 14, 1991
Sheep	February 15, 1991 to February 3, 1992
Monkey	February 4, 1992 to January 22, 1993
Rooster	January 23, 1993 to February 9, 1994
Dog	February 10, 1994 to January 30, 1995
Boar	January 31, 1995 to February 18, 1996



RAT

People born in the year of the RAT are charming, nosy and straight talking! They like to be in the thick of things and they make it their business to know your business. Rats want to run the show and, because they are very clever and adaptable, they often do.



OX

People born in the year of the OX are reliable, hard working and calm but they can also be rather stubborn. They are kind and extremely patient but watch out if they do lose their tempers! The Ox makes a determined leader.



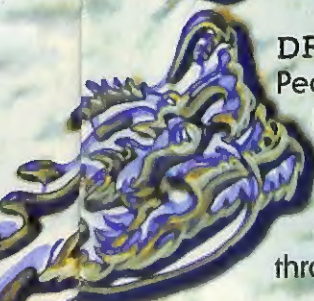
TIGER

People born in the year of the TIGER are daring, go-getting and love life. They always think things will turn out well and don't worry about the future. Tigers are impatient and this may give them a quick temper and they will always be ready for a fight.



RABBIT (OR HARE)

People born in the year of the RABBIT are kind, artistic and natural diplomats. Rabbit feelings can be hurt easily and they can be moody. They hate arguments and prefer to get their own way by being cunning. Rabbit people are very independent.



DRAGON

People born in the year of the DRAGON have strong personalities. They usually think they're right, can be quite demanding and blunt, and may be eccentric (a bit weird). They blaze through life and rarely accept defeat.



SNAKE

People born in the year of the SNAKE are deep thinkers with natural wisdom. Snakes are fast learners and they enjoy being in charge – but they're not good communicators. They're good negotiators, but if you cross a snake they will always strike back!

HORSE

People born in the year of the HORSE are cheerful, popular and bright but they can be unpredictable at times as well as hot-tempered and rash. Horses are often outdoor types, but their mind is as strong as their body. They are moody and have to express their feelings.

SHEEP

People born in the year of the SHEEP are very kind. Sheep always mean what they say. They avoid conflict but can get their own way through perseverance. They are always surrounded by friends and the Chinese believe they attract luck.

MONKEY

People born in the year of the MONKEY are very confident. They are clever, flexible and charming. However, they may ignore other people's feelings. Monkeys have the two clearest sides of the human personality: intelligence and cunning.

ROOSTER

People born in the year of the ROOSTER are often good looking. They are neat, organised and witty, but – watch out – they can be very blunt. They are happiest when they are the centre of attention. When Roosters take on a problem they see it through to the end.

DOG

People born in the year of the DOG are loyal and like to see fair play. They always try to answer a call for help. Dogs can be secretive and have a fiery temper. They take time to trust others and like to divide people into friend or foe.

BOAR (OR PIG)

People born in the year of the BOAR are brave and honest and will stick to a task until it is done. They look for harmony and they are generally popular. They are totally loyal and generous but can be too trusting. A love of pleasure can be their downfall.

WITCHES' BREW PUZZLES

HUBBLE, BUBBLE...

What's cooking in the cauldron? Find out by unravelling the chant below.

2 s s of s
d of
 of s, drops, g d with
 t-s, 2 m up ft
 b m ic s,
 b se

TRY YOUR LUCK

These six things are said to be either lucky or unlucky. Do you know which?



FASCINATING FACTS

In the past, witches were generally thought to be in league with the devil and do harm to people. However, white witches or wisemen/women were an exception. Although folk took care not to upset or anger them, their help was often sought for everything from solving a dispute to curing illness.

WITCH WORDS?

Add the missing words to these famous lines spoken by Shakespeare's witches. The words to choose from have been carved off the cave (right).

When shall we
 meet again,
 In thunder,, or in
?

When the hurly-burly's
,
 When the battle's
 and won.

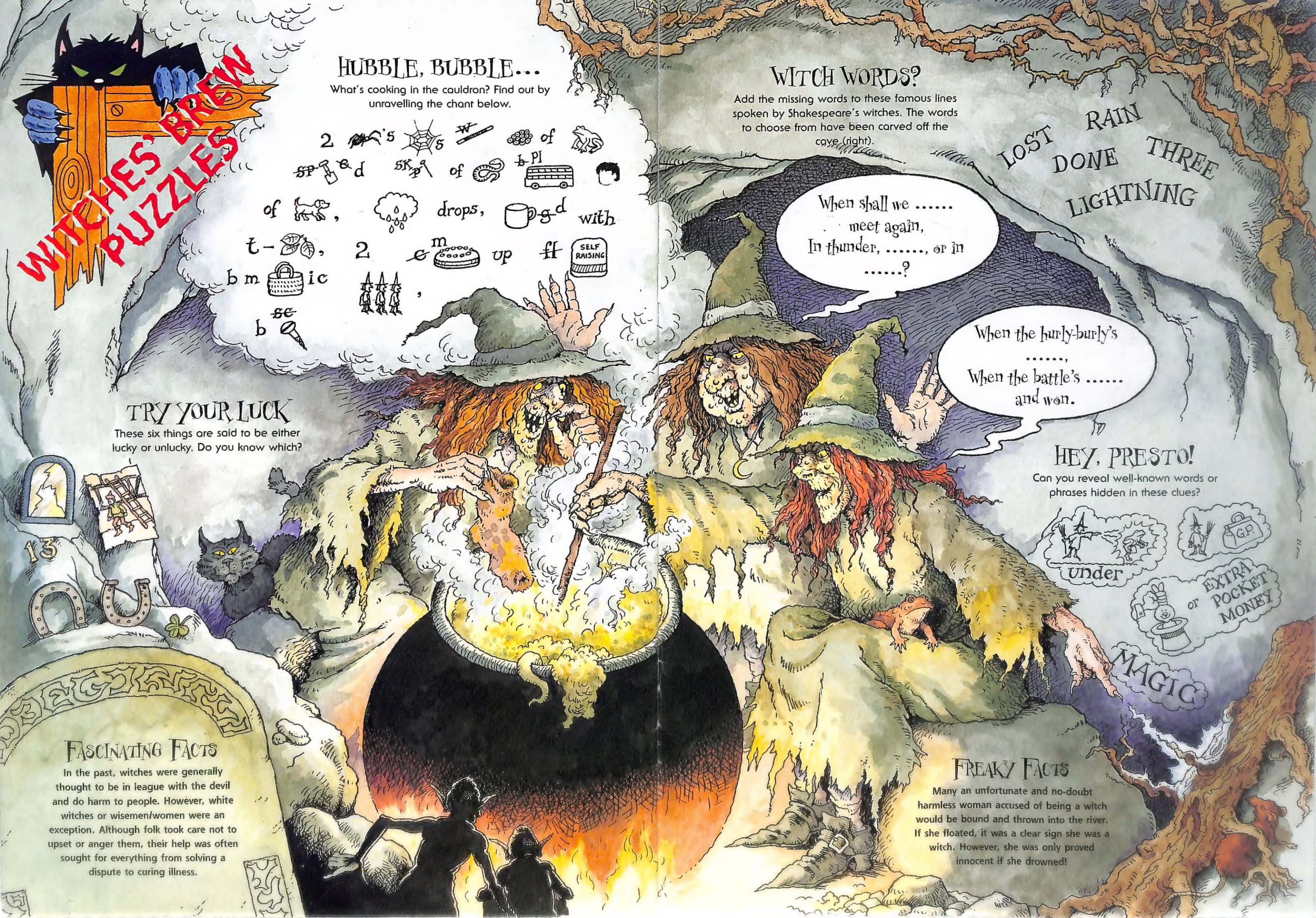
HEY, PRESTO!

Can you reveal well-known words or phrases hidden in these clues?



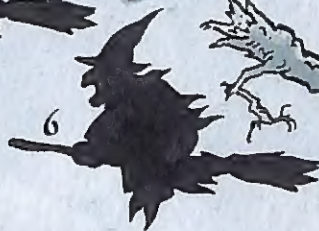
FREAKY FACTS

Many an unfortunate and no-doubt harmless woman accused of being a witch would be bound and thrown into the river. If she floated, it was a clear sign she was a witch. However, she was only proved innocent if she drowned!



WHICH WITCHES?

Pick the two odd-witches-out! Both of them are different in three ways.
What are they?



SPELLING LESSON!

Complete the nine words by adding a single, missing letter each time. But choose your letters carefully so, when written in their corresponding boxes within the grid, they will spell a bewitching time!



1. -ASTE

6. STE-

7. R-AD

4. -ATE

8. CHE-R

3. SA-E

5. R-AR

FEARSOME FACTS

Hundreds of supposed witches were put to death during the time of the Witchfinder General, Matthew Hopkins, who hailed from Essex. In that county, alone, during 1645, he hanged some sixty witches. But Hopkins profited from his fearful trade, earning handsomely for every witch he discovered! Witch-hunt fever reached the early settlers in America where, in 1692, the notorious witch trials of Salem, Massachusetts, took place.



ANSWERS

HUBBLE, BUBBLE: To spider's web and spawn of frog, add skin of snake plus hair of dog, raindrops, mud with tea-leaves, too, make up our magic witches' brew.
WITCH WORDS: When shall we three meet again, in thunder, lightning, or in rain? When the hurly-burly's done, When the battle's lost and won, TRY YOUR LUCK: Four-leafed clover - lucky; broken mirror - unlucky; a U-shaped horseshoe - lucky, unlucky if turned the other way; 13 - unlucky; walking under a ladder - unlucky.
WITCH WITCHES: Witches 2 and 4 are the odd-ones-out. Witch 2 has a large wart on her nose, a cat on her broomstick and a shoe pointing backwards. Witch 4 has a shorter broomstick, the top of her hat bends the other way and she has a shorter flap on the top of her cloak.
HEY, PRESTO!: Under a spell: witchdoctor; tick or treat; black magic.
SPELLING LESSON: 1 HASTE 2 DAWN 3 SATE 4 LATE 5 ROAR 6 STEW 7 READ 8 CHEEP 9 STAIN. So the grid word is hallowe-en.

